
TEATRU
MANOEL



1204

The Manoel Theatre

presents

The Manoel Theatre Orchestra

conducted by

Joseph Sammut

with soloist

Lucia Micallef

in a

PIANO AND ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

of works by

Otto Nicolai

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Ludwig van Beethoven

31 January 1989

The Evening's Composers (and Compositions) as featured in some famous letters

DONIZETTI TO THE LIBRETTIST JACOPO FERRETTI

Rome, 6 March 1836

...I have seen with infinite pleasure, the pieces composed by our mutual friend Ottone Nicolai; he is so well versed in the art of music that in my opinion he lacks nothing but an opportunity for the public to echo my approval...



MOZART
TO HIS
FATHER

10 February 1784

...I by myself have some thirty more than Richter and Fischer together (Academies; public subscription concerts with orchestra; an important source of income for Mozart during the early days of his married life. In this letter he includes a list of 174 aristocratic subscribers to such an Academy. He continues...) **for on the last three Wednesdays in Lent, beginning on 17th March, I am to give three subscription concerts at the Trattner Hall; the price for all three concerts is 6 fl. I shall give two concerts in the theatre this year; so you can imagine that I must play new things, and that means composing them. The whole morning is given over to my pupils, and nearly every evening I have to play** (he lists 22 events, from 26 February to 3 April)... **Have I not enough to do? I do not think I shall get out of practice in these circumstances...**

FROM J.F. REICHARDT'S 'VERTRAUTE BRIEFE' (1808)

...Beethoven was giving a concert for his benefit at the big theatre in the suburbs... I could not possibly miss that, so I gratefully accepted Prince von Lobkowitz's kind offer to take me out there and give me a seat in his box. There, in the bitterly cold theatre... neither I nor the exceedingly kindhearted and tactful prince, whose box was in the first tier, quite close to the stage, where the orchestra was placed with Beethoven conducting it - felt we could leave the box before the end of the concert, though many faulty performances put a great strain on our patience. The singers and orchestra had been scraped together at random, and some of the pieces - all of which were full of the greatest difficulties - had not been played right through even once at rehearsal. Nevertheless you will be astonished to hear how many compositions by that fertile genius were performed during the four hours. First came a Pastoral Symphony, or reminiscence of country life... Each movement was a very long, perfectly constructed piece full of

Vienna, 25 December 1808



vivid description and brilliant ideas and figures; so that this Pastoral Symphony lasted longer by itself than the time allowed for an entire court concert with us (at Kassal)...

PROGRAMME

Overture, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Otto Nicolai
(1810-1849)

The composer was born in Königsberg, Germany, and studied in Berlin where in 1830 he completed several vocal and choral compositions.

On becoming the conductor of the Vienna theatre he wrote the operas *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, *Il Templario*, and *Ivanhoe*. In 1847, Nicolai became the Kappellmeister of the Berlin Royal Opera where his opus magnum, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was premiered two years later, March 9, 1849. Nicolai directed only four performances before being stricken by a fatal apoplectic stroke. He died in Berlin on May 11, 1849 – the very same day that his appointment to the Berlin Academy was officially announced!

Merry Wives is one of the most celebrated and important German comic operas of the nineteenth century. Based on the Shakespeare comedy of the same name, with text by Salomon Hermann Mosenthal, it was received magnificently in Berlin, and wherever else it was performed after that. Vienna produced it on the 12 February, 1852 with formidable success and it appeared for the first time in the U.S.A. on 16 March, 1863, in Philadelphia, in New York in 1864, and in Covent Garden later in the same year. The text is very faithful to the Shakespearean comedy.

The overture is considered to be quite a classic in salon music. A slow introduction presents a soaring tune which comes from the violins. After various sections of the orchestra have had the opportunity to tackle the subject matter and treat it in imitation, the main body of the overture unfolds. The two principal themes are then heard. Both of them are very lively, and the second, played by the violins is intended to portray Mrs Page, who with Mrs Ford is the recipient of Falstaff's identical love notes and consequently plans to be revenged on him. The development of the second theme is meant to suggest the rotund lecher Falstaff. The music is consistently sprightly and remains so until the concluding coda. The melodies introduced in the overture recur in the various choral passages and dance episodes of the opera.

Concert in C minor k 491

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

allegro - larghetto - allegretto

Three important piano concertos were written by Mozart between November, 1785 and April, 1786, evidently for a series of Lenten subscription concerts in Vienna. The series concludes with the concert in C minor which was completed on the 24 March 1786. All three were written during the time that Mozart was working on his highly successful opera, *the Marriage of Figaro*, and producing some of his happiest music. Yet this concerto is full of melancholy and poignant emotion. The musicologist Sir Donald Rovey calls its Finale "sublime" and Beethoven is said to have been deeply affected by it.

The opening uncovers the dark moods which are bolder and more provocative than any discernible in other Mozart concertos. As the critic John N. Burk explains; in place of the "usual diatonic opening subject" we find a "tortuous, chromatic succession of phrases with upward skips of diminished sevenths". There is a temporary respite from adventurous writing in the gentle melody for the woodwind. The first theme sweeps it away and then the piano is heard in a new minor melody adding to the excitement with the agitating scale passages. The development and recapitulation both emphasise and intensify the pathos of the earlier material. A cadenza then leads into an extended coda.

In the *larghetto* the agitation slowly makes way for serenity in the form of a rondo. The finale — variations on the two themes — reverts to sobriety and gloom. The second subject sets the stage for what Burk describes as an "astonishing chromatic development — a chromatism which serves for thematic individualisation and transition".

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Symphony no 6 in F major op 68

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

allegro ma non troppo - andante molto moto - allegro - allegretto

After the monumental *Fifth Symphony*, the composer relaxed. His *Sixth*, known by the title of *Pastoral*, is simple and melodious; definitely a piece of programme music; with the composer himself supplying explicit

directions for its interpretation. It was written in the Heiligenstadt country in the summer of 1808 and first performed, along with the Fifth, in the concert of December 22, 1808, at the An der Wien theatre in Vienna. The dedication also parallels that of the Fifth, to Prince Lobkowitz and Count Rasoumowsky.

Beethoven was a real lover of Nature, and he expresses this love throughout the symphony, even to the extent of imitating bird-calls, a brook and a storm. He asked that this music be considered "more as an expression of feeling than painting" but its programmatic character is obvious. (In *Fantasia*, one of his earliest cartoon movies, Walt Disney turned Beethoven's shepherds into stylised nymphs, fauns, centaurs and satyrs).

The first movement, *allegro ma non troppo*, carries the composer's explanatory note: "Awakenings of pleasant feelings on arriving in the country". Over a droning bass the strings immediately sing a bit of folk music that is completely in the pastoral spirit. Other thematic materials are of minor importance since the development deals mostly with the opening tune and there is a complete recapitulation and a long coda.

The second movement, *andante molto moto*, starts with a slow theme which is entitled "Scene by the Brook" in which the accompaniment easily represents the murmuring of the brook itself. Towards the end Beethoven introduces his imitations of bird-song; the flute trilling in the manner of the nightingale; the clarinet representing the cuckoo with the traditional two notes, a third apart; and the oboe adding the high monotone of the quail. (It is a wonder how there are no known records of local hunters and trappers using the second movement to lure game their way!)

Marked by the composer: "Merry gathering of the people", the third movement, *allegro*, conjures a tune which is again of a distinctly rural type and might actually be a country dance. It is followed by the musical thunderstorm which for many people is not particularly convincing. There is the mild thunder, by the drums, and the whistling of the wind is also conventionally suggested. There is no pause as the symphony goes into its finale, the *allegretto*, described by the composer as "Shepherd's Song" and "Happy and thankful feelings after the storm". The clarinet gives an introductory impression of the shepherd's pipe which is followed by the thanksgiving song. Some subordinate snatches of melody creep in but the shepherd's tune stands out dominating even the long coda, where the relationship with the opening theme of the symphony is emphasized.



LUCIA MICALLEF was born in 1961.

Her music studies began at the age of four under Giovanna Bascetta.

In 1980 she won the three-year scholarship of the Associated Board to the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied with Lois Phillips F.R.A.M. until she left, after being awarded an additional year's scholarship and several prizes.

Lucia Micallef also studied at the Accademia Chigiana of Siena with Rudolph Buchbinder.

In 1985 she was awarded the Young Musicians' Talent Trust prize for the United Kingdom, where she gave numerous recitals, both as a soloist and as chamber-music player.



Teatru Manoel Forthcoming Events

February

12th at 7.00p.m.

The Celebrations Committee 25th Anniversary of Independence presents **Kuncert Kimmemorattiv** Entrance Free. Booking opens Tuesday, 7th Feb.

17th at 7.30p.m.

in association with ALITALIA THE MANOEL THEATRE ORCHESTRA conducted by **Silvano Frontalini** soloist **Michael Laus**. PROGRAMME: Carmelo Pace: Scene in Ancient Persia, L. v. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No 5 'Emperor', Mendelssohn: Symphony No 3 in A minor-major. *Prices Lm2, Lm1.50.*

23rd at 7.30p.m.

ALEXANDER ROY LONDON BALLET THEATRE presents THE MAGIC FLUTE music by W.A. Mozart choreography by Alexander Roy TCHAIKOVSKY DIVERTISSEMENT Excerpts from *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. *Prices: Lm4, Lm3.*

24th at 7.30p.m.

25th at 7.30p.m.

26th at 6.30p.m.

28th at 7.00p.m.

in association with the Italian Cultural Institute IL TEATRO DEL DRAGO presents the Marionettes show entitled IL RAPIMENTO DEL PRINCIPE CARLO at the foyer. *Prices: Adults Lm1, Children: 50c.*

The Manoel Theatre Management Committee wishes to thank the following concerns for their kind co-operation.

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